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THE EXCAVATIONS AT SENDSCHIRLI, AND SOME OF THEIR BEARINGS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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Debt of biblical study to excavation.—Sendschirli and the mounds of Syria.—Assyrian monuments discovered.—The Aramaic inscriptions and their story.—The statue of Bar-Rekub.—The analogies in the biblical history.—The Hadad monument.—Its historical and religious significance.—Later literature on the subject.

Biblical study owes much to the explorations that have been conducted with such uninterrupted activity in the Orient during the past fifty years. It is astonishing indeed to note how, at almost every turn, some witness of antiquity is found that furnishes an illustration to a bit of biblical history, or has some bearings on biblical customs, or throws new light upon biblical speech. An ancient palace is exhumed on the site of Nineveh, and in the record left by its builder we read an account of his attempt to destroy the kingdom of Judah. A traveler passing through Moab comes across an ancient stone, and new data are revealed of King Mesha's conflict with the kingdom of Israel. Some peasants stumble upon the archives of Egyptian kings, and as a result the history of Jerusalem is traced back to a period five hundred years before David made it the capital of his kingdom. And so again recent excavations conducted by German archæologists at a mound in northern Syria have brought to light material of the greatest interest and value to biblical lore.

For a long time Semitic scholars felt justified in looking for a rich yield from the explorer's spade in this region. The territory lying between the Orontes and the Taurus range is dotted with mounds of the artificial character of which there was no doubt. Moreover, many of the so-called Hittite monuments were found in this region and lastly from Egyptian, biblical, and more especially Assyrian sources, it was evident that great political

activity once prevailed here. The Assyrian records tell of many a bloody conflict waged against the principalities into which the territory was split up, and the many names of towns mentioned by the Assyrian conquerors furnish an index for the thickness of the population. Ten years ago a German scholar, Dr. F. von Luschan, formed the plan of attacking one of these mounds that appeared especially promising. It was known among the natives as Sendschirli, *i. e.*, chain—a name suggested probably by its appearance, which is long and narrow. Situated at the foot of the Taurus mountains, some sixty miles above Antioch, it bordered on the highway leading from Assyria to the Mediterranean, and at the same time formed a natural barrier against advance to the north. Sufficient interest having been aroused in Luschan's project to lead to the formation of a special "Orient Committee" in Germany, an expedition was sent out in the spring of 1888, the success of which prompted further diggings in 1890 and 1891. The first-fruits have now been made public, and one is warranted in classing the German undertaking among the most significant of this age of Oriental explorations. Although only a portion of the mound has been explored, the remains of several large buildings have been exhumed, containing magnificent sculptures, besides a large number of minor objects. Several walls have been traced, adapted by means of numerous little towers for the defense of the place, and in the third place, inscriptions have been found both at Sendschirli and in a neighboring place known as Gerdshin. It is the inscriptions that furnish the clue to the identification of the place.

Strange to say, while the sculptures of Sendschirli show all the characteristics of "Hittite" art, no Hittite inscription was met with. Instead we have a magnificent monolith covered with cuneiform characters and three monuments with "Aramaic" inscriptions. The Assyrian monument turns out to be one erected by the famous Esarhaddon, who ruled over Assyria from 681 to 668 B. C. This is the king, it will be remembered, whose name is recorded in II Kings, 19: 37, as the successor of Sennacherib.¹

¹The murder of Sennacherib is referred to in a Babylonian chronicle in these interesting words: "On the twentieth of Tebet, Sennacherib was murdered by his son in an uprising, after having ruled over Assyria twenty-three years."

According to his annals, all the rulers of Palestine and the Phœnician coast were forced to do his bidding, and among these rulers he mentioned "Manasseh of Judæa." Esarhaddon also undertook several campaigns against Egypt, in the third of which he succeeded in capturing the city of Memphis. This occurred in the eleventh year of his reign, and the monument at Sendschirli is devoted to a record of this triumphant event. In addition to the inscription there is a pictorial representation on the stone of the king himself in the act of holding two captives by means of ropes which have been cruelly drawn through their lips. These captives appear to be Tarku, the king of Egypt and Ethiopia, and, as I conclude from a reference in the Babylonian Chronicle B (col. iv, 27), Ushankhuri his son, though Schrader and others take one of the two to be Ba'alu king of Tyre. It must have been on his return from Egypt that Esarhaddon passed through Sendschirli, and left this monument in the place, partly to satisfy his thirst for glory and in part, no doubt, to serve as a warning against would-be opponents of Assyria's all-grasping control.

The monument furnishes a valuable date for the age of the building in the courtyard in which it was discovered. At the same time, Esarhaddon's omission to make any reference to Sendschirli itself is sufficient ground for concluding that no opposition to his sovereignty came from this district. As a matter of fact, Sidon alone of all places lying to the west of the Euphrates endeavored to throw off the yoke of Assyria during Esarhaddon's reign. The other principalities, Judæa, Moab, Edom, Tyre, and the whole of northern Syria, bought their peace by a show of submission. About a century and a half previous, however, the situation was different, and it is to this period that we are carried back by the "Aramaic" inscriptions.

A survey of the situation is essential to an understanding of these inscriptions. At that time (745-727 B. C.) Tiglathpileser III. sat on the throne of Assyria. He was a usurper who, profiting by the dissensions that so frequently arose from the rivalry between Babylonia and Assyria, succeeded in establishing a new dynasty. He was probably a Babylonian by birth, and upon mounting the throne exchanged his name Pul for one that was

famous in the land as the author of Assyria's greatness some four centuries previous. The change of dynasty was the signal for a general uprising in the lands that were obliged to acknowledge the sovereignty of Assyria, and hence Tiglethpileser is busy during the greater part of his reign in expeditions to the north, east, and west for the purpose of reëstablishing Assyria's control over the lands conquered by Shalmaneser II. about a century earlier. As in the days of the latter, the fortunes of the two Hebrew kingdoms are bound up with those of the Phœnician coast and Syria proper, and it is one of the most valuable services rendered to the study of biblical history by the Assyrian records, that it enables us to bring the events chronicled in the Books of Kings into their proper connection with the political movements of the times. In the days of Shalmaneser, Ahab, the king of Israel, joins a grand coalition of twelve rulers of Palestine and Syria to withstand the onslaught of the Assyrian armies, and accordingly, after the defeat of the "alliance," he shares the fate of his associates in being forced to pay tribute to Assyria. In the days of Tiglethpileser III., the southern Hebrew kingdom becomes involved in the political turmoil, and the Assyrian conqueror deals severely with both Azariah of Judah and Menahem, the king of Israel.

Unfortunately the section of Tiglethpileser's cylinder devoted to an account of his relations with the Hebrew kingdoms is in a bad state of preservation. But for this, we would have many an interesting detail to add to the brief account of his Palestinian campaigns in the fifteenth chapter of II Kings, where, it is interesting to note in passing, Pul, the real name of Tiglethpileser, occurs by the side of his royal one. Still the broader aspect of the events which shook central and southern Palestine in its foundations is indicated by the parallel to the struggle going on in northern Syria. Tiglethpileser overruns the entire region up to the Taurus range, and in the same list with Menahem of Samaria he places Rezin of Damascus, Hiram of Tyre, Sibittibil of Byblos, Pisiris of Carchemish, Ini-ilu of Hamath, Panammu of Sam'al, and more the like—all paying tribute to him.

The "Aramaic" monuments of Sendschirli throw an unexpected light upon this period. On all three of the inscriptions we read a name identical with one of the kings whom Tiglethpileser includes in the above list—namely, Panammu of Sam'al, and as a further aid to identification, one of the inscriptions begins, "I am Bar-Rekub, the son of Panammu, king of Sam'al,¹ the servant of Tiglethpileser, the king of the four quarters of the earth." The date therefore is beyond all doubt.

It is to the memory of this Panammu that Bar-Rekub erects the statue which von Luschan was fortunate enough to find. The head and entire upper portion of the huge dolorite block out of which the monument was carved are missing, but the body containing the inscription and the feet are preserved. The mere fact that the inscription, which consists of twenty-three lines, shows the old Phœnician characters, the letters having very much the same form as on the Moabite stone, and that the language is Aramaic, though bearing a closer resemblance to Hebrew than the Aramaic of later days, is quite as important as the contents of the inscription itself. The monument furnishes a northern limit for Aramaic speech at this early period, its southern limit being the Arabian peninsula; and in the light of this discovery one can understand how a few centuries later, Aramaic should have succeeded in replacing Hebrew as the popular tongue of Palestine, and in maintaining its position there through the period of Greek and Roman supremacy down to the Mohammedan conquest. The story that Bar-Rekub has to tell, gives a vivid picture of the political conditions prevailing at the time, and in this respect may be regarded as complementary to biblical and Assyrian narratives. Some of the events referred to, moreover, are curiously paralleled in Hebrew history, and serve to bring out in sharper outline the human features of this history.

Bar-Rekub begins by recalling the marvelous preservation of his father at a time of general uprising directed against the reigning house of Sam'al. In the course of the outbreak Bar-Sur, the father of Panammu, together with seventy "brothers," were killed, Panammu alone surviving the slaughter. One is involuntarily

¹ Written with *SH* in the Sendschirli inscription; in the Assyrian documents with *s*.

reminded, as Professor D. H. Muller suggests, of the occurrence that took place among the Israelites after the death of Gideon. Seventy "sons" of the latter were put to death by Abimelech, and only one escaped. The use of the word "brothers" in the one case, as that of "sons" in the other, must be understood in accordance with Oriental usage as members of the household. As for the number seventy, the suggestion which naturally occurs to one that it is a round number, used in a rough way much as we speak of "scores of people," is strengthened by its re-occurrence in another biblical incident similar to the above two. Jehu mounts the throne, killing Ahab and seventy "sons."

One of the immediate results of the internal disturbances was a scarcity of food. This was a natural consequence of the devastation which reached such a degree that, as Bar-Rekub puts it, "the number of destroyed towns outnumbered the populated ones;" but instead of being attributed to this cause, the famine is represented as a punishment sent by the god Hadad for the outrages that were committed in the country. Corn, wheat, and barley rose in price "until half a measure of wheat cost a shekel, and a measure of barley cost a shekel, and a liquid measure of certain drinks cost a shekel." It is interesting to compare this with Elisha's prophecy concerning the delivery of Samaria from the famine incident to the long siege by Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram: "Tomorrow a measure of fine meal will be offered for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel at the gate (*i. e.*, the market) of Samaria." Ben-Hadad abandoned the siege because of a rumor that the Egyptians in the south and the Hittites in the north had combined at the instance of the king of Israel for an attack upon Aram from two sides.

The land of Sam'al is included in the Khatti, or Hittite land, by the Assyrian monarchs, and now that some of these Hittites are in trouble, they turn for protection to Assyria. Panammu makes a pact with the king of Assyria, sending him presents and agreeing to become a follower in his camp. In return Tiglathpileser recognizes Panammu as the rightful king, and removed the "stone of destruction." Tranquility was restored. Those who had been thrown in prison by the rebel authorities were set

free, the women too were liberated, buildings were restored, food and drink became plentiful so that "prices fell." Assyria was, however, the real gainer by the situation. Henceforth the king of Sam'al became merely the servant of the Assyrian monarch. Tiglethpileser pursued much the same policy of interference as in the kingdom of Israel, only that in the case of the latter a rebel was pitted against an usurper. According to his own narrative, Tiglethpileser abetted the cause of Hosea against Pekach and by the powerful aid of Assyria, the former was established on the throne. As a matter of course, a large tribute was sent by King Hosea to his powerful master.

Panammu keeps faith with Tiglethpileser. He follows him on his expeditions "from the rising sun to the setting thereof." In return Tiglethpileser enlarges the territory entrusted to Panammu. The latter dies in Tiglethpileser's camp at Damascus. He is deeply mourned by the king and his army. In solemn procession the body is carried to its final resting-place in Sam'al, much as Jacob's body is borne from Egypt to Palestine. "And I Bar-Rekub," the inscription goes on to say, "because of the merit of my father, and because of my own merit, was established on the throne of my father, Panammu, the son of Bar-Sur by my lord the king of Assyria."

The opening words of the second of Bar-Rekub's inscriptions quoted above show that the position of dependency was maintained in the days of Panammu's successor. No attempt is made to throw off the foreign yoke, and Bar-Rekub devotes himself.

An earlier phase of the history of the district is revealed by the third monument, which moreover adds to our knowledge of the religious ideas prevailing in ancient Sÿria. It is a representation of the god Hadad, accompanied by a dedicatory inscription of Hadad. The name of the devotee who erects the image is again Panammu, but a different Panammu, as his father's name Karal, shows. That he is older than Panammu, the son of Bar-Sur, is proven by the characters on the monument, which shows a more archaic type as well as by the express mention of Panammu, the son of Karal, in the inscription of Bar-Rekub, as that

of an earlier ruler. The Sendschirli inscriptions thus furnish us with a list of five rulers, namely :

Karal,
Panammu,
Bar-Sur,
Panammu II.,
Bar-Rekub.

Whether Bar-Sur follows immediately upon Panammu I. is not certain, but quite likely, since it was quite customary for the grandson to take the name of his grandfather. So the two Benhadads of Aram stand in this relation to one another. Panammu II. being the contemporary of Tiglethpileser III., Karal's reign may be approximately placed at the end of the ninth century, or contemporaneous with Shalmaneser II. (860-825) and King Ahab. Shalmaneser II. indeed makes mention of the country of Sam'al, and through him we learn of a sixth and still earlier ruler, Khânu, the son of Gabar, who is associated with four other North-Syrian chiefs in warding off the attack of Assyrian arms. This took place at the beginning of Shalmaneser's reign. Some years later, when the latter again turned to the west for the purpose of crushing the opposition of central Syrian and Palestinian princes—Ahab among them—Khanu preferred to acknowledge Assyrian supremacy without making any struggle. We may assume then that Karal and Panammu I. likewise were, for all practical purposes, subjects of Assyria. A difference, however, between the earlier and the later Panammu that cannot as yet be satisfactorily accounted for, is in their titles; Panammu II. calls himself king of Sam'al, whereas Panammu I. is the king of Ya'di. Of the two, the latter appears to be the more inclusive. Again, while Shalmaneser also speaks of the country of Sam'al, at the time of Tiglethpileser, it is a city. It would seem, therefore, that the district derived its name from the city; and when the jurisdiction of the Sam'al kings was curtailed, they were known as governors of the old city. The etymology of Sam'al is not without interest. It is a well-known Semitic word, which in Hebrew, Arabic, Assyrian, and Syriac, signifies the "left." It is thus the complement of "Yemen," which means "the right side;" and we may further

conclude from this nomenclature that the ancient Semites were accustomed to guide themselves by turning to the rising sun—perhaps a trace of ancient sun-worship. The common Arabic name for Syria, Shâm is closely connected with the ancient Sham'al.

Coming back to the inscription of the earlier Panammu, we find it taken up with the praise of the power and majesty of Hadad, though by the side of Hadad four other deities are mentioned. Two of these are well known, and their occurrence here is significant, El and Shamas. The former, became the generic term for deity among the Assyrians, and among the Hebrews it was used to designate the one and only God. Shamas is the sun-god, whose worship was especially prominent in southern Babylonia. The remaining two are peculiar to northern Syria: Reschep, who seems to have been a "Hittite" deity, and Rakubel, who is met here for the first time. Panammu attributes to Hadad and the associate deities his position as well as his possessions. It is they who have placed him on the throne and who have granted him whatever he has asked of them—peace and plenty. The king describes his land in language that is entirely biblical. "It is a land of barley, a land of wheat, a land of the leek." Through the gods, the jurisdiction of the kings of Ya'di was increased. War and misfortune were kept at a distance. "In my days," he adds, "food and drink were plentiful." After recounting a piece of personal history, which does not concern us here, Panammu closes with solemn warnings against doing injury to the stone. The person who dares to deface the inscription, to alter the name of the king, to cast the monument into water, or to burn it, or even to hide it from public view, or expose it to neglect—woe to him! The curse of Hadad is called down upon him. The name of the offender and that of his seed will be wiped off the face of the earth. "He will be accursed in the sight of gods and men." More than one third of the entire inscription is taken up with this imprecation, the close resemblance of which to the phrases commonly found at the close of Assyrian inscriptions suggests a direct borrowing from the latter. In view of the close contact existing between Assyria and Sam'al, nothing appears more natural.

In conclusion, a few words about the deity Hadad, who is an interesting personage to biblical students for various reasons. In the proper names Ben-Hadad and Hadadezer, the well-known kings of Aram and of Sobâ, the name of the deity constitutes one of the elements, and it is perhaps present in Hadad of Erosis, 36, 36. The former name signifies "the son of the god Hadad," and the contemporary of Ahab calls himself thus, just as a king of Sam'al takes the name Bar-Rekub, that is, "the son of the deity Rekub." The occurrence of Hadadezer in the days of David testifies to the worship of this deity in Syria at least a century earlier than Panammu, the son of Karal. A passage in Zechariah (12:11), shows that at Megiddo a yearly festival was held in honor of Hadad, and through this same passage we also receive a valuable clue for determining the special character of this deity. He appears in Zechariah under the compound designation Hadad-Rimmon. Such compounds—of which there are many parallels in Semitic mythology—point to a combination of two deities of parallel attributes. Hadad-Rimmon accordingly is equivalent to saying that Hadad is Rimmon. Now the god Rimmon or Ramman is well known from Assyrian monuments. He is the god of thunder, and then of storms in general. Kings of Babylonia and Assyria, as early as the fourteenth century before this era, declare themselves to be worshipers of this deity. The identification of Hadad with Ramman accordingly suggests that the former was of a violent character, suitable as the head of a pantheon for warlike groups such as the ancient inhabitants of the Sam'al district must have been. Gods who manifest themselves in storm and wind are generally found associated with a mountain, and the Taurus range at the northern boundary of Syria fulfills the conditions for what was perhaps the original seat of Hadad. From the extreme north, the worship of the deity made its way to the south and as early as the fifteenth century B. C. the name of the deity under the form Addu—a contraction apparently of Adadu—enters as an element in the proper names of inhabitants of Phœnicia and Palestine.¹ The Sendschirli monument thus adds an interesting chapter to

¹ Cf. Rib-Addu and Yiptakh-Addu in the El-Amarna tablets.

the history of this deity, and accounts for the popularity that he continued to enjoy for such a long range of centuries, down in fact to the Græco-Roman period where Hadad is still known as the "king of the gods."

For the benefit of those interested in these remarkable monuments of Sendschirli, a list of the chief publications that have appeared bearing on the subject is subjoined: (1) First in order comes the publication of the Berlin Museum itself, under the title "Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli I." (1893). The chapters in the first part have been prepared by Dr. Luschan, Profs. Schrader and Sachau. (2) Die Altsemitischen Inschriften von Sendscherli, by Prof. David Heinrich Müller in the *Zeitschrift fuer die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. VII., Nos. 2 and 3. (3) Les Deux Inscriptions heteennes de Zindjirli, by Prof. Joseph Halevy in the *Revue Semitique*, Vol. I., Nos. 2, 3, 4, and Vol. II., No. 1. (4) Theodor Nöldeke's review of the Berlin publication in the *Zeitschrift der Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesells.*, XLVII., pp. 96-105. (5) J. A. Craig in the *Academy*, 1893, p. 441, and (after the above article had been sent to the printers) (6) The Excavations at Sendschirli, by Prof. D. H. Müller in the *Contemporary Review* for April, 1894.